OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
MAY 1962 EDITION
GSA GEN. REG. NO. 27

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO: Mr. DeLoach

DATE: 6/24/70

FROM: T. E. Bishop

SUBJECT: ASSASSINATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING

By way of background, on 4/27/70 Assi ant Attorney General William Ruckelshaus, Civil Division, Department c Justice, advised the Director that Harold Weisberg, the author of the b s "Whitewash I" and "Whitewash II," has filed a civil action against the I partment of Justice and Department of State demanding copies of all the pa s which were employed in the extradition in the James Earl Ray matter. T se documents were used in the extradition proceedings against James Earl in England and were thereafter returned to the State Department and we transferred to the Department of Justice. Included in the documents e a considerable number of affidavits of FBI Agents, affidavits covering fing prints, ballistics' examinations, etc. Ruckelshaus asked if the relea of these documents to Weisberg would in any way prejudice the work of th BI. It is noted that Weisberg is an author who has been extremely crit l of the FBI, the Secret Service and other police agencies in books which h s written about the assassination of President Kennedy.

By memorandum of April 30th the Direc advised Ruckelshaus that the determination as to the release of the perti t documents is within the province of the Department of Justice and the F interposes no objection. It was suggested, however, that the Civil Division c municate with the Civil Rights Division of the Department on this matter si Federal process was still outstanding against Ray charging a violation of Federal Civil Rights Statute.

The Bureau is in possession of a copy o letter dated May, 1970, from Jerris Leonard, Assistant Attorney General, il Rights Division, to Ruckelshaus stating that any release of any informat n in the files pertaining to the investigation regarding James Earl Ray woul inimicable to the investigation.

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Enc. 1 - ENCLOSURE

1 - Mr. DeLoach
1 - Mr. Bishop
1 - Mr. Rosen
1 - Mr. Sullivan
1 - Mr. Jones

(CONTINUED-OVER)

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Memorandum to Mr. DeLoach
Re: Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King
Current Developments

On 6/24/70 Bill King in the Information Office, Department of Justice, advised that the Department subsequently decided that it would not be possible for the Government to successfully defend the civil action by Weisberg against the Department for the release of the documents in question. Accordingly, copies of these documents were furnished to Weisberg. King advised that in view of the fact that the Department had released the documents to Weisberg the Department did not wish Weisberg to make a profit from his possession of the documents and, accordingly, has decided to make similar copies available to the press and others who might desire them. King stated that the documents to be released consist of approximately 200 pages of copies of affidavits, autopsy reports, affidavits with regard to fingerprint examinations and ballistics tests, and copies of other documents which serve to link Ray with the assassination of Martin Luther King. At Bishop's request King furnished the attached set of the documents being released. King stated that these documents will be released to the press at 3 p.m. on 6/24/70.

The General Investigative Division has been orally advised of the above information.

RECOMMENDATION

None. For information.

Did you get a written instruct. from Dept. confirming conversation King has with you?